

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 L-03 SAJ-01 DRC-01

ACDA-19 /108 W

----- 032310

R 101541Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4259

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION NATO

USDOCOSOUTH

USEUCOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5057

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS, PFOR, MY, LY, IT

SUBJECT: REPORTS OF LIBYAN MILITARY TRAINING MISSION

REF: VALLETTA 647

1. FONOFF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE FOR MALTA (TORELLA) CONFIRMED REPORT REFTTEL OF APPARENT MINTOFF PLAN TO ACCEPT LIBYAN MILITARY PERSONNEL TO TRAIN PIONEER CORPS. TORELLA SAID THAT REACTION AT THE FARNESINA IS PRESENTLY ONE OF INTENSE CURIOSITY RATHER THAN ALARM. FONOFF IS PARTICULARLY INTRIGUED BY MINTOFF'S EXPLANATION THAT ACCEPTANCE OF LIBYAN TRAINING PERSONNEL IS LEAST MALTA CAN DO TO REPAY MONEY ADVANCED BY QADHAFI. TORELLA WAS NOT AWARE OF ANY LARGE SUMS PASSED TO MINTOFF FROM TRIPOLI RECENTLY.

2. WHATEVER MINTOFF'S MOTIVES MAY BE, TORELLA SAID THAT MINTOFF'S TRACK RECORD MAKES FONOFF VERY SUSPICIOUS. HOWEVER, IF LATEST MINTOFF MOVE IS DESIGNED TO BRING PRESSURE ON ITALIANS, FONOFF IS UNAWARE WHAT TARGETS HE MAY HAVE IN MIND AS THERE ARE NOT OUTSTANDING REQUESTS FROM VALLETTA AT THE PRESENT TIME. CONSEQUENTLY, CONFIDENTIAL

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ITALIAN PLAN FOR THE MOMENT IS TO WAIT FOR THE OTHER SHOE TO DROP

WHILE LEARNING ALL THEY CAN IN THE MEANTIME ABOUT MINTOFF'S REAL INTENTIONS.

3. ACCORDING TORELLA, MINTOFF HAS INFORMED GOI THAT HE WILL BE VISITING LONDON SOMETIME AFTER EASTER AND WOULD LIKE TO STOP OFF EN ROUTE OR ON HIS RETURN TO SEE RUMOR AND MORO. WHILE ITALIANS, FEARING NEW MINTOFF DEMANDS, ARE NORMALLY RELUCTANT TO SEE HIM EVERYTIME HE PASSES THROUGH ROME, EITHER PRIME MINISTER OR FOREIGN MINISTER WILL AGREE TO SEE HIM THIS TIME IN ORDER TO PROBE ON THE LIBYAN TRAINING PROJECT AND MAGNITUDE OF QADHAFI'S CASH OVERTURES. OCCASION WILL ALSO BE USED TO QUERY MINTOFF ON STATUS AND PROSPECTS OF MALTA-LIBYA MERGER PROPOSAL (VALLETTA 659).VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY TRAINING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 APR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ROME05057
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740082-1098
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740451/aaaaburc.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: VALLETTA 647
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <06 MAR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORTS OF LIBYAN MILITARY TRAINING MISSION
TAGS: MARR, MASS, PFOR, MY, LY, IT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005